

CASTLE ROCK

March 1985

The Stephen King Newsletter

ISSUE #3

I don't think I have to tell anyone the big news for this month. Yes, Stephen King is indeed Richard Bachman. One of the toughest things about doing this newsletter has been that I've not been able, until now, to reveal that to the readers. I have known that Stephen was using a pseudonym for years, but I was sworn to secrecy. I am relieved now that I don't have to lie or be evasive anymore. Last month I hinted that a secret would be revealed, and Stephen intended to keep it quiet until March 1st, but a local newspaper decided they would run the story with or without his comment, as they had enough proof, and as Stephen told them, the whole thing was coming apart--he likened it to having a bag of groceries that gets wet and things keep falling out the bottom until you can't hold it together anymore. For months now he's been getting letters asking if the rumor was true, and in late January ENTERTAINMENT TONIGHT did a segment aluding to the connection, and that really fueled the rumors. I'm sorry CASTLE ROCK couldn't have told you first, but again, it wasn't up to me. The covers of the four paperback originals can be found on page 9 of the newsletter, to make it easier for those of you who want to scour used bookstores for them. The first four books are now out of print, but the latest, THINNER, is available from NAL BOOKS for \$12.95. Plans are being made to re-issue the first four books in an omnibus edition, and as soon as I know a publication date, I'll let you know. If there are any questions you have about the Bachman books, don't hesitate to ask. I'll answer them if I can. And please send copies of any pieces you might see about R.B. along to us...we'd love to see how it was reported around the country...

THE MIST will become a video game, with software being developed by a company called ANGELSOFT. Mercer Meyer, author of many wonderful children's books, is the driving force behind the company. No idea as yet when it will be available, but of course, we'll keep you posted...

CAT'S EYE will be in the theatres soon. As we said before, this is one you don't want to miss. One reader wanted to know if there would be a novelization, but there are no plans for one.

S.K. is currently working on a screenplay called TRUCKS, based on the short story by the same name from NIGHT SHIFT. He hopes to direct this one....the NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW (Feb.10) contained a review of Elmore Leonard's new book GLITZ by S.K. He enjoys doing the occasional book review, and this one was a rave...there is a clothing store in London called Stephen King and a fan sent him a matchbook as proof--it looked a lot like an S.K. book, black with gold lettering...another reader wanted to know what the significance of the houses on Stephen's personal stationary might be (see page 10 for an example of one of the houses)--S.K. lives on a street of mostly Victorian houses, so he thought it was appropriate, but none of the houses pictured are his...S.K. is still scheduled to speak at the University of Massachusetts on April 1st, but there is a possibility that this may be cancelled, therefore the University will probably not be selling (actually it may be free) tickets until two weeks before that date. If you think you might want to go, send me an stamped self-addressed postcard and I will give you ticket information as soon as I have it or notify you of the cancellation, if that comes about...Several people lately have intimated that my hand-writing, especially my signature, is a lot like S.K.'s, one even saying it was "masculine". I wonder if they were hinting at something, and finally one person told me he had decided that I was a pseudonym Stephen King used at times (Stephanie being the feminine form of Stephen, Leonard being derived from lion, the King of beasts!). Not true, ask anyone who's talked to me on the phone!

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DOLAN'S CADILLAC

By Stephen King

Part two (of five)

(Synopsis of Part One: "Dolan slipped," the bald and mousy third-grade teacher who narrates this story tells us. "And my wife Elizabeth was there, at the wrong place and the wrong time...she was questioned and she said yes, she would testify...She got into her car one night and there was dynamite wired to the ignition...He made me a widower--Dolan."

(The Dolan in question is a Las Vegas hood. The narrator is a third-grade teacher who will not rest until he sees Dolan dead. While following Dolan back from Dolan's L.A. residence, a mad idea comes to Elizabeth's vengeance-obsessed husband. He has considered and rejected the idea of creating a false detour in the desert and luring Dolan's silver Cadillac down it. Dolan, he thinks, would smell a rat. But suppose, instead of creating a false detour, he simply took away a real one?

(The narrator embarks upon a grim physical improvement program and sticks out four weeks of gruelling physical labor on a Las Vegas municipal road-crew before being promoted by the foreman, Harvey Blocker, to a slightly easier job: driving a front-end loader.)

"God says, 'Take what you want.
And pay for it.'"

--Spanish proverb

5.

By April of the following year I was on the State Highway Commission's mailing list. Every month I received a bulletin called Nevada Road Signs. I skimmed most of the material, which concerned itself with pending highway improvement bills, road equipment that had been bought and sold, State Legislature action on such subjects as sand dune control and new anti-erosion techniques. What I was interested in was always on the last page or two of the bulletin. This section, simply titled The Calender, listed the dates and sites of roadwork in each coming month. I was especially interested in sites and dates followed by a simple four-letter abbreviation. RPAV. This stood for repaving, and my experience on Harvey Blocker's crew

DOLAN'S CADILLAC

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had showed me that these were the operations which most frequently called for detours. But not always--no indeed. Closing a section of road is a step the Highway Commission never takes unless there is no other choice. But, sooner or later, I thought that those four letters would spell the end for Dolan. Just four letters, but there were times when I saw them in my dreams. RPAV.

Not that it would be easy, or even soon--I knew I might have to wait for years, and that someone else might get Dolan in the meantime. He was an evil man, and evil men live dangerous lives. Four vectors would have to come together, like a rare conjunction of planets: vacation time for me coinciding with one of Dolan's trips either to L.A. or back to Vegas coinciding with a major RPAV on Route 71 coinciding with a national holiday that created a three-day weekend.

Years, maybe. Or maybe never. But I felt a kind of serenity--a surity that it would happen, and that when it did I would be prepared. And eventually it did happen. Not that summer, not that fall, and not the following spring. But in June of last year, I opened Nevada Road Signs and saw this in The Calender.

JULY 1-JULY 2- (tent.). U.S. 71 MI
440-472 (WESTBND) RPAV

Hands shaking, I paged through my desk calender to July and saw that July 4th fell on a Monday.

So here were three of the four vectors, for surely there would be a detour somewhere in the middle of such an extensive repaving job.

But Dolan...what about Dolan? What about the fourth vector?

Three times before I could remember him going to L.A. during the week of the Fourth of July--a week which is one of the few slow ones in Las Vegas.

I could remember three other times when he had gone somewhere else--once New York, once Miami, once all the way to London, and a fourth time when he had simply stayed in Vegas.

If he went...

Was there a way I could find out?

I thought on this long and hard, but two visions kept intruding. In the first I saw Dolan's Cadillac speeding west toward L.A. along U.S. 71 at dusk, casting a long shadow behind it. I saw it passing DETOUR AHEAD signs, the last of them warning CB

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owners to turn off their sets. I saw the Cadillac passing abandoned road equipment-- bulldozers, graders, front end loaders. Abandoned not just because it was after knocking-off time but because it was a weekend, a three-day weekend.

In the second vision everything was the same except the detour signs were gone.

They were gone because I had taken them down.

6.

It was the last day of school when suddenly I realized how I might be able to find out. I had been nearly drowsing, my mind a million miles away from both school and Dolan, when I suddenly sat bolt upright, knocking a vase on the side of my desk (it contained some pretty desert flowers my students had brought me as an end-of-school present) to the floor, where it shattered. Several of my students, who had also been drowsing, also sat bolt upright, and perhaps something on my face frightened one of them, because a little boy named Timothy Urich burst into tears and I had to soothe him.

Sheets, I thought, comforting Timmy. Sheets and pillowcases and bedding and silverware; the rugs; the grounds. Everything has to look just so. He'll want everything just so.

Just so.

I began to smile, and Timmy Urich smiled back, but it wasn't Timmy I was smiling at.

I was smiling at Elizabeth.

7.

School finished on June 13th that year. Twelve days later I flew to Los Angeles. I rented a car and checked into the same cheap hotel I had used on other occasions. On each of the next three days I drove into the Hollywood Hills and mounted a watch on Dolan's house. It could not be constant watch; that would noticed. The rich hire people to notice interlopers, because all too often they turn out to be dangerous.

Like me.

At first there was nothing. The house was not boarded up, the lawn was not overgrown--heaven forbid!--the surface of the pool was not scummy. But there was a look of emptiness and disuse all the same--shades pulled against the summer sun, no cars in the central turnaround, no one to use the nice clean pool that a young man with a pony-tail cleaned each morning.

I became convinced it was a bust. Yet I

stayed, wishing and hoping for the final vector.

On the 29th of June, when I had almost consigned myself to another year of watching and waiting and exercising and driving a front-end loader in the summer for Harvey Blocker (if he would have me again, that was), a blue car marked LOS ANGELES SECURITY SERVICES pulled up at the gate of Dolan's house. A man in a uniform got out and used a key to open the gate. He drove his car in and around the corner. A few moments later he came back on foot, closed the gate, and relocked it.

This was at least a break in the routine. I felt a dim flicker of hope.

I drove off, managed to make myself stay away for nearly ten hours, and then drove back, parking at the head of the block instead of the foot this time. Fifteen minutes later a blue van pulled up in front of Dolan's house. Written on the side were the words BIG JOE'S CLEANING SERVICE. My heart leaped up in my chest. I was watching in the rear-view mirror, and I remember how my hands clamped down on the steering wheel of the rental car.

Four women got out of the van, two white, one black, one Chicano. They were dressed in white like waitresses, but they were not waitresses, of course--they were cleaning women.

The security guard answered when one of them buzzed at the gate, and unlocked it. The five of them talked and laughed together. The security guard attempted to goose one of the women and she slapped his hand aside, still laughing.

One of the women went back to the van and drove it into the turnaround. The others walked up, talking among themselves as the guard closed the gate and locked it again.

Sweat was pouring down my face; it felt like grease. My heart was triphammering.

They were out of my field of vision in the rear-view mirror. I took a chance and looked around.

I saw the back doors of the van swung open.

One of them carried a neat stack of sheets; another had towels, another had a pair of vacuum cleaners.

They trooped up to the door and the guard let them inside.

I drove away, shaking so badly I could hardly steer the car.

They were opening the house. He was coming.

8.

Dolan did not trade in his Cadillac every year, or even every two--the gray Sedan DeVille he was driving as that June neared its end was three years old. I knew its dimensions exactly. I had written the GM company for them, pretending to be a research writer. They had sent me an operator's manual and spec sheet for that year's model. They even returned the stamped, self-addressed envelope I had enclosed.

I had then taken three figures--the Cadillac's width at its widest point, height at its tallest, and length at its longest, to a friend of mine who teaches mathematics at Las Vegas High School--I have told you, I think, that I had prepared for this, and not all my preparation was physical. Most assuredly not.

I presented my problem as a purely hypothetical one. I was trying to write a science fiction story, I said, and I wanted to have my figures exactly right. I even made up a few plausible plot fragments--my own inventiveness rather astonished me.

My friend wanted to know how fast this alien scout vehicle of mine would be going. It was a question I had not expected, and I asked him if it mattered.

"Of course it matters," he said. "It matters a lot. If you want the scout vehicle in your story to fall directly into your trap, the trap has to be exactly the right size. Now this figure you've given me is seventeen feet by five feet."

I opened my mouth to say that wasn't exactly right, but he was already holding up his hand.

"Just an approximation," he said. "Makes it easier to figure the arc."

"The what?"

"Arc of descent," he repeated, and I cooled off. That was a phrase with which a man bent on revenge could fall in love. It had a dark, smoothly portentous sound. The arc of decent.

I'd taken it for granted that if I dug the grave so that the Cadillac could fit, it would fit. It took this friend of mine to make me see that before it could serve its purpose as a grave, it had to work as a trap.

The shape itself was important, he said. The sort of slit-trench I had been envisioning might not work--in fact, the odds of it not working were greater than the odds that it would. "If the vehicle doesn't hit the start of the trench dead

on," he said, "it may not go all the way in at all. It would just slide along on an angle for awhile and when it stopped all the aliens would climb out the passenger door and zap your heroes." The answer, he said, was to widen the entrance end, giving the whole excavation a funnel shape.

Then there was this problem of speed.

If Dolan's Cadillac was going too fast and the hole was too short, it would fly across, sinking a bit as it went, and either the frame or the tires would strike the lip of the hole on the far side. It would flip over on its roof--but without falling in the hole at all. On the other hand, if the Cadillac was going too slow and the hole was too long, it might land at the bottom on its nose instead of its wheels, and that would never do. You couldn't bury a Cadillac with the last two feet of its trunk and its rear bumper sticking out of the ground any more than you could bury a man with his legs sticking up.

"So how fast will your scout vehicle be going?"

I calculated quickly. On the open highway, Dolan's driver kept it pegged between sixty and sixty-five. He would probably be driving a little slower than that where I planned to make my try. I could take away the detour signs, but I could not hide the road machinery or erase all the signs of construction.

"About twenty rull," I said.

He smiled. "Translation, please."

"About fifty earth-miles an hour."

"Ah-hah." He set to work at once with his slip-stick while I sat beside him, bright-eyed and smiling, thinking about that wonderful phrase: arc of descent.

He looked up once. "You know," he said, "you might want to think about changing the dimensions of the vehicle, buddy."

"Oh?" Why do you say that?"

"Seventeen by five is pretty big for a scout vehicle." He laughed. "That's damn near the size of a Cadillac."

"I laughed, too. We laughed together.

9.

After I saw the women going into the house with the sheets and towels, I flew back to Las Vegas.

I unlocked my house, went into the living room, and picked up the telephone. My hand trembled a little. For nine years I waited and watched like a mouse behind a baseboard. I had tried never to give Dolan the slightest clue that Elizabeth's husband

was still interested in him--the look of disinterest he had given me that day as I passed his disabled Cadillac on the way back to Vegas, furious as it had made me, was my just reward.

But now I would have to take a risk. I would have to take it because I could not be in two places at the same time and it was imperative that I know if Dolan was coming, and when Dolan was coming.

Even more important than knowing if I would have enough time to dig the hole was knowing when to make the detour temporarily disappear.

I had worked out a plan coming home on the plane. I thought it would work. I would make it work.

I dialed Los Angeles directory assistance and asked for the number of Big Joe's Cleaning Service. I got it and dialed.

"This is Bill at Dunny's Catering," I said. "We got a party Saturday night at 1121 Aster Drive in Hollywood Hills. I wanted to know if one of your girls would check for Mr. Dolan's big punch-bowl in the cabinet over the stove. Could you do that for me?"

I was asked to hold on. I did, somehow, although with the passing of each endless second I became more and more sure that he had smelled a rat and was calling the phone company on one line while I held on the other.

At last--at long, long last--he came back on. He sounded upset, but that was all right. That was just how I wanted him to sound.

"Saturday night?"

"Yes, that's right. But I don't have a punch-bowl as big as they're going to want unless I call across town, and my impression was that he already has one. I'd just like to be sure."

"Look, mister, my call-sheet says Mr. Dolan ain't expected in until six P.M. Sunday night. I'll be glad to have one of my girls check out your punch-bowl, but I want to straighten this other business out first. Mr. Dolan is not a man to fuck around with, if you'll pardon my French--"

"I couldn't agree with you more," I said.

--and if he's going to show up a day early, I got to send some more girls out there right away."

"Let me double-check," I said. The third-grade reading textbook I use, Roads to Everywhere, was on the table beside me. I picked it up and rifled some of the pages

close to the phone.

"Oh, boy," I said. "It's my mistake. He's having people in Sunday night. I'm really sorry. You going to hit me?"

"No, that's okay--I guess I should be made, but the truth is I'm too damned relieved. You had me making lemonade in my pants for a minute there, buddy. Let me put you back on hold--I'll get one of the girls and have her check on the--"

"No need, if it's Sunday," I said. "My big punch-bowl's coming back from a wedding reception in Glendale Sunday morning."

"Okay. Take it easy." Comfortable. Unsuspicious. The voice of a man who wasn't going to think twice.

I hoped.

I hung up and sat still, working it out in my head as carefully as I could. To get to L.A. by six, he would be leaving Vegas about when I had expected--ten o'clock Sunday morning. And he would arrive in the vicinity of the detour between eleven-fifteen and eleven-thirty, when traffic was apt to be almost non-existent, anyway.

I decided it was time to stop dreaming and start acting.

I looked through the want-ads, made some telephone calls, and then went out to look at five used vehicles that were within my financial reach. I settled for a battered Ford van that had rolled off the assembly line the same year Elizabeth was killed. I paid cash. I was left with only two-hundred and fifty-seven dollars in my savings account, but this did not disturb me in the slightest. On my way home I stopped at a rental place the size of a discount department store and rented a portable air compressor, using my MasterCard as collateral.

On Friday afternoon I loaded the van: picks, shovels, compressor, a hand-dolly, toolbox, binoculars, a jackhammer with an assortment of arrowhead-shaped attachments made for slicing through asphalt. A large square piece of sand-covered canvas, plus a long roll of canvas--this latter has been a special project of mine last summer--and twenty-one thin wooden struts, each five feet long.

On the edge of the desert I stopped at a shopping center and stole a pair of licence plates and put them on my van.

Seventy miles west of Vegas, I saw the first orange sign: CONSTRUCTION AHEAD PASS AT YOUR OWN RISK! Then, a mile or so beyond that, I saw the sign I had been waiting for since...well, ever since Elizabeth died, I

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suppose, although I hadn't always known it.

DETOUR AHEAD 6 MILES.

10.

Dusk was deepening toward dark as I arrived and surveyed the situation--it could have been better if I'd planned it, but not much.

The detour was a right turn between two rises. It looked like an old fence-line road which the Highway Department had smoothed and widened to temporarily accomodate the heavier traffic flow. It was marked by a flashing arrow powered by a buzzing battery in a padlocked steel box.

Just beyond the detour, as the highway rose toward the crest of that second rise, the road was blocked off by a double line of road cones. Beyond them (if one was so extraordinarily stupid as to have, first, missed the flashing arrow and, second, run over the road cones without realizing it--I suppose some drivers were) was an orange sign almost as big as a billboard, reading ROAD CLOSED USE DETOUR!

Yet the reason for the detour was not visible from here, and that was good. I didn't want Dolan to have the slightest chance of smelling the trap before he fell into it.

Moving quickly--I didn't want to be seen at this--I got out of the van and quickly stacked up some dozen of the road cones, creating a lane wide enough for the van. I dragged the ROAD CLOSED sign to the right, then ran back to the van, got in, and drove through the gap.

Now I could hear an approaching motor.

I grabbed the cones again, replacing them as fast as I could. Two of them spilled out of my hands and rolled down into the gully. I chased after them, panting. I tripped over a rock in the dark, fell sprawling, and got up quickly with dust on my face and blood dripping from one palm. The car was closer now; soon it would appear over the last rise before the detour-junction and in the glow thrown by his high beams the driver would see a man in jeans and a t-shirt trying to replace road cones while his van stood idling where no vehicle that didn't belong to the Nevada State Highway Department was supposed to be. A bald man with white sunblock cream smeared all over his pate.

I got the last cone in place and ran back to the sign. I tugged too hard. It swayed and almost fell over.

As the approaching car's headlights began to brighten on the rise to the east, I suddenly became convinced it was a Nevada State Trooper.

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The sign was back where it had been--and if it wasn't, it was close enough. I sprinted for the van, got in and drove over the next rise. Just as I cleared it, I saw headlights splash over the rise behind me.

Had he seen me in the dark, with my own lights out?

I didn't think so.

I sat back against the seat, eyes closed, waiting for my heart to slow down. At last, as the sound of the car bouncing and bucketing its way down the detour faded out, it did.

I was here--safe behind the detour.

It was time to get to work.

11.

Beyond the rise, the road descended to a long straight flat. Two-thirds of the way along this straight stretch the road simply ceased to exist--it was replaced by piles of dirt and a long wide stretch of crushed gravel.

Would they see that and stop? Turn around? Or would they keep on going, confident that there must be an approved way through since they had not seen any detour signs?

Too late to worry about it now.

I picked a spot about twenty yards into the flat, but still a quarter of a mile from the place where the road dissolved. I pulled over to the side of the road, worked my way into the back of the van, and opened the back doors. I slid out a couple of boards and muscled the air compressor down them. I got out and looked up at the cold desert stars.

"Here we go, Elizabeth," I whispered to them.

It seemed I felt a cold hand stroke the back of my neck.

(To be continued)

MONSTERLAND #2 contains an interview with S.K. by Charles Grant. This will be serialized and if you can't find it in your area, write to James Van Hise, 14156 Tobiasson Rd., Poway, CA 92064, and send \$4.00 (postpaid) and he will send you a copy.

There are several "Castle Rock's" in the U.S.--one in Washington State, and one in Pennsylvania, but that's not where S.K. got the name. Do you know where? Answer next month in CASTLE ROCK...

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"SHINING AT THE OVERLOOK"

Part two

by

Terrie Bagnato

(Terrie, an avid fan, decides to visit the hotel that inspired THE SHINING, The Stanley in Estes Park, Colorado. In part one we heard about the preparations for the trip--music from the movie sound track on tape, a "Danny" doll, appropriate t-shirts, and of course a copy of the book--and the drive from California to Colorado. Now we'll find out what she found...)

My first disappointment was the lack of topiary hedge animals anywhere on the hotel grounds. We did see a few bushes trimmed to look like unkempt shrubbery in it's natural growth, but no dogs, lions or rabbits. Down the drive from the employee parking I noted the playground on the left, equipped with one blue slide, (not two) a blue swingset and a sandbox. There was no cement ring that had entrapped Danny, and no miniature Overlook Playhouse. Down the sweeping lawn from the front of the hotel was the swimming pool. There WAS a nondescript fence enclosing the property on the west side, as per King. The eerie similarity of the hotel to the picture on the dustjacket of the novel was too close for coincidence.

Approaching the hotel on foot, we noted that the roof shingles were red, not green. However, this was the only contradiction to the description of the hotel's exterior, set forth in King's novel. Countless windows stared down at us as we strolled the pink walkways that led to the hotel porch. As King had stated, the old fashioned colonaded veranda ran the length of the hotel. It had the aura of a turn-of-the-century Colonial mansion.



From the moment we stepped through the double doorways into the spacious lobby, we were in another era. Directly ahead was a wide sweeping staircase with hand-turned balustrades, and intricately carved balusters. Flanking the stairway were two stone fireplaces, with delicate ornate trimmings. Craning my neck, however, I did NOT see the three nuns sitting on the sofa as King had described. This was an unforgivable error, and I made a mental note to write to King regarding this discrepancy in an otherwise perfect description of the lobby.

Old fashioned high-backed chairs were arranged on plush gold-patterned carpet. A piano sat near the east fireplace with a sign requesting that visitors abstain from using it for a giant coaster. Although we didn't measure it, it would be safe to say that the lobby DID run for eighty feet in either direction from the registration desk at the center of the hotel. Behind the desk were the offices, just as King told us.

To the west was the enormous dining room with its fabulous western exposure on not yet snow dusted peaks. A sign over the entrance identified it as "The MacGregor Room." A sharp right, just before the dining room entrance would set you directly in front of the Colorado Lounge, actually called "The Dunraven Grille."

To the east of the registration desk, roped off with velvet cord, were the banquet and ballroom facilities, as depicted in the novel. A larger piano was stationed there, and today it is referred to as "The Music Room."

After identifying ourselves and receiving our room key, we headed for the lounge, tape wailing, smiling at dignified guests who stared after us. After all, it probably wasn't every day that two adults took a doll to the hotel bar, especially garbed the way we were.

(cont'd next pg.)

"No batwing doors" Jack observed with a sigh, as we took a seat at the bar. It was directly against the west wall, in contrast to the bar in the book, which was completely across the room. The barstools WERE upholstered in black leather, but there were no cattle brands embossed in the material. Nor were there any wagon wheel chandeliers. For that matter, the bar was more L shaped than horseshoe, and the carpet was green plaid, not red. On the other hand, the cushioned bar edge WAS red leather, and the room WAS filled with high-backed booths and gleaming formica tables. There also WAS an entrance to the kitchen and dining room at the far end of the bar, but again, double doors, not batwing. Despite the minor differences in the lounge's description, I could STILL picture Wendy and Danny dragging Jack off to the pantry, and I was thrilled to be in the very bar "where it all happened."

The novel must have been required reading for employees, as a condition to the job. In any case, the employees were very "up" on the plot and characters and many approached to admire the outfits and to welcome Danny back to the Overlook Hotel.

After a few drinks for courage, we began our ascent to room 340 a.k.a. Room 217, tapes wailing and recording everything in our path.

Before taking the stairs, I checked to the right of the staircase and I'm happy to report that the brass elevator does exist and is still operational. It is exactly as King described, ornately scrolled in copper and brass, with a gate that pulls across during use. While guests may not use the elevator unaided, any of the employees are happy to pilot at a moments notice. There is a special talent required in lining up the floor of the elevator with the desired hotel level, as King has told us. An experienced operator can guage it within inches with his eyes closed, though we didn't meet many such operators during out stay. (Harry Graham, the hotel Sales Manager, came pretty close.)

Just as thrilling as finding the elevator was the discovery of the old-fashioned fire extinguishers at both ends of the second and third floors. Attached to an old-fashioned valve was a flat canvas hose, folded many times on itself and ending in a brass

nozzle. The folds were secured with a red slat on a hinge, just as King described. Just below were modern red extinguishers in the usual glass cases. Apparently the axe was never replaced after Jack removed it in the story. And under our feet, as we stood admiring the fire hoses, was the famous "Jungle Carpet."

Sorry, friends, but I crawled on my HANDS AND KNEES looking for black silhouetted birds, but nowhere could I find a bird or the color black, unshaded or otherwise. The main carpet was bright red, not blue, although green and blue did predominate what could be taken for vine-like patterns. I suppose after a few drinks in the Colorado lounge, one might see a bird or two, but alas, nary a bird could I find on this notorious carpet described so heavily and so often in the book.

Our enthusiasm remained undaunted, however, for we were on our way to Room 217, where, in the story, a woman soaks forever in an old claw tub, still digesting an overdose of sleeping pills.

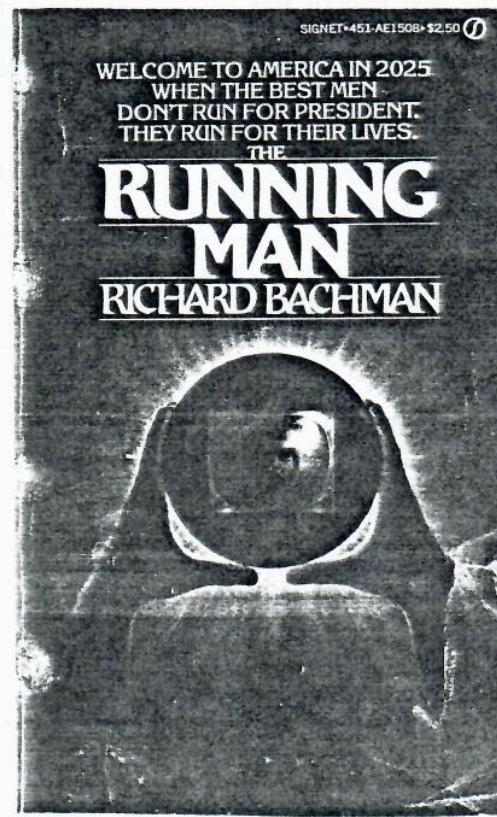
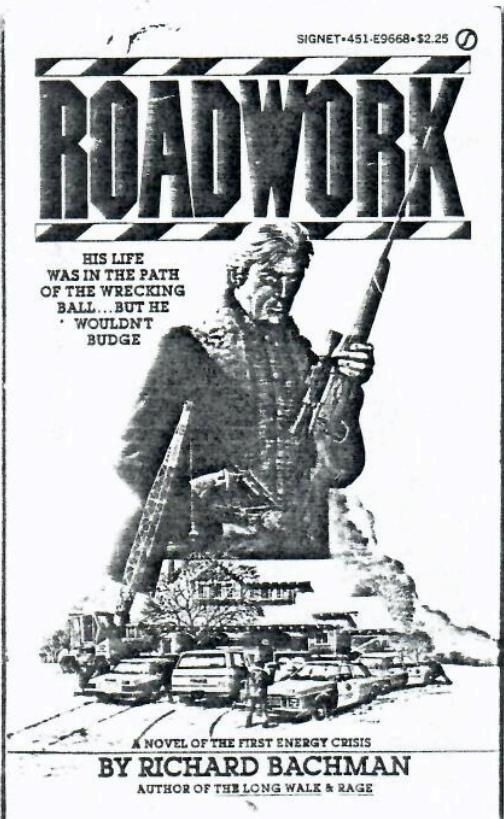
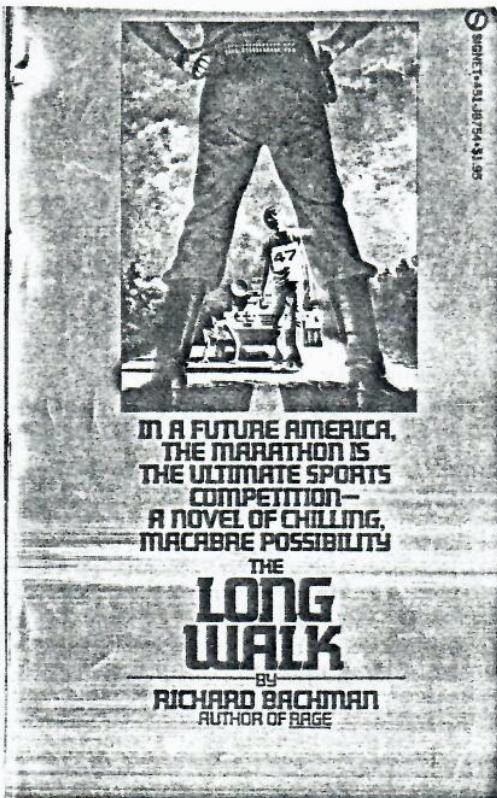
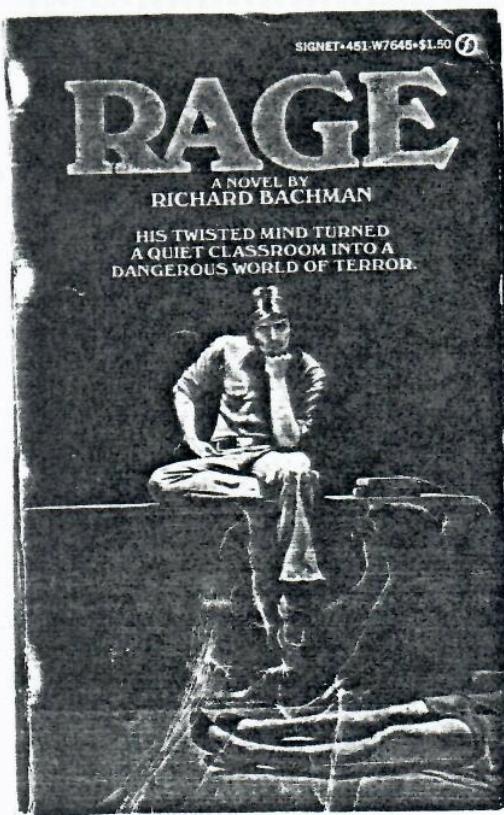
Room 217, according to King, was in the western exposure, halfway down a corridor that ran at right angles to the main hallway.

Wrong. Room 217 is almost right smack in the middle of the main second floor hallway, just across from the elevator shaft. The room door was brown wood, not gray, and there was no peephole. However, to the background music, and quite a few odd looks from passerbys, we excitedly inserted the key and let the door creak slowly open.

We found ourselves in a perfect replica of the room King described. (cont.on pg. 10)

CASTLE ROCK has obtained one slightly imperfect copy of EYES OF THE DRAGON (several pages were inadvertently not printed, but the missing text will be written in), and we will give it to the reader who sends us the most convincing I WANT THIS BOOK letter. We will print the letter in an upcoming issue. This contest is open only to subscribers of CASTLE ROCK. All letters must be submitted to CASTLE ROCK by May 15th, 1985. Please send them to CASTLE ROCK, I WANT THIS BOOK CONTEST, BOX 8183, Bangor, ME 04401. One entry per subscriber please...

DESPERATELY WANTED: The Eyes of the Dragon. Please call (714) 620-4044 and ask for Gwen or leave message with CASTLE ROCK.



Boris, S.K.'s pet scorpion died Feb. 5th. Boris has been in residence in a terrarium on S.K.'s desk for over a year, having been given to S.K. after a speaking engagement in the West. He is now encased in lucite. No flowers please...

Reproduced here are the covers of the first 4 Bachman novels. RAGE was published first, in 1977, THE LONG WALK in 1979, ROADWORK in 1981 and THE RUNNING MAN in 1982. All were published by Signet. It was incorrectly reported by many papers that they were all written when S.K. was in college--in actuality this is only true of RAGE (the first 40 pages were written in high school) and THE LONG WALK.

Why did he publish under a pseudonym? One reason was that he could publish more often--he was not encouraged to publish a "Stephen King" book more often than once a year, twice at most for fear of glutting the market. So rather than leaving a finished book in a drawer where it might become outdated, he chose to publish them under a pseudonym. He was also interested in finding out how the books would sell without "THE" name. He wondered if he could have bestsellers using a pseudonym. Had the news not broken, he might have found out. He will at some time do a print interview on the subject, and when that time comes, I will let you know about it. For those of you who might wonder, the gentleman whose picture graces the jacket of THINNER is an insurance salesman & a friend of Stephen's agent who agreed to pose as Bachman. Some guessed it might be Stephen's father. More on Bachman next month, I'm sure!

CASTLE ROCK will go out early this month because of R.B. April's issue will be mailed on the first of that month.

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Well, almost. It WAS a bed-sitting room, and there WAS a four poster double bed with a white coverlet. (There was also a single bed with a white coverlet and the nightstand was between them. No visible Bible.)

By the large window that overlooked the center front of the hotel was the writing desk King mentioned. (Having a wonderful time. Wish you were fear.) The bureau was also there near the closet, the one containing the hangers you couldn't steal. (Jack promised to get me one for a souvenir, but King was right. They were permanently affixed). Hanging from a closet doorknob was a disposable shoe shine cloth sporting a "happy face" and the statement: Have a nice shine! Undoubtedly donated by a chuckling employee with tongue firmly in cheek.

To the right of the closet was the bathroom door. The mirror was actually on the closet door, but no reason to get nit-picky here.

The bathroom, according to King, was shaped like a pullman car with tiny hexagonal tiles on the floor. (The tiles were actually large and coffin shaped.) The toilet was situated just inside the door, NOT the far end of the bathroom, and the washbasin was to the left, not the right. I demanded to see the REAL Room 217.

"Wait a second..." Jack breathed, eyeing the huge white claw tub in the center of the bathroom. "At first I thought this was a rip-off, but that bathtub is worth \$75.00 a night. Only there's no pink curtains. And where's the body?"

"The carpet is also dark green, not rose pink." I pouted. "But what's the difference? We've got STEPHEN KING'S room, and THAT'S the bed he slept in."

After an exquisite buffet in the MacGregor Room, we set out to explore the lobby and hotel grounds. The Stanley was even more King-oriented than I'd dared hope, for in the lobby was a glass display case with an article about King, how he'd come to the hotel and how the novel came to be written. Beside that was a letter from Stephen King himself, cancelling reservations for 1983 due to the vast amount of work he was involved in. In the hotel gift shop was a stack of paperback books

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for sale, all "THE SHINING", and late at night, in the banquet room, the movie was shown for any guest who cared to see it.

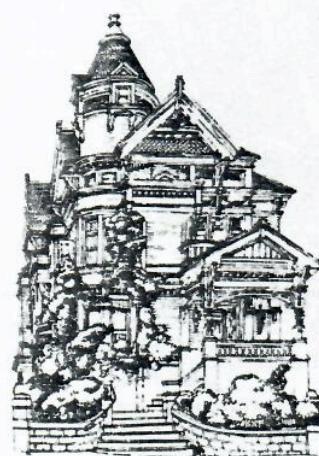
The first evening I decided to explore the basement alone, left Jack in the lobby reading the article, and went looking for the boiler room. I found a dark dusty cement basement, typical of many hotels, and I stopped to admire a miniature scale model of Estes Park that was set up on a lighted table. My back to the staircase, I didn't think anything of the sound of approaching footsteps on the concrete. Presuming Jack had come looking for me, I turned to find nobody there. It was my first fright in the hotel, but it was not to be my last. Of course, this ended my exploration of the basement, and I broke a track record taking those stairs back to the lobby.

While I slept quite well that evening, Jack reported that in spite of the long motor trip, he'd spent a fitful sleepless night, for no logical reason, and had awoken more tired than when he'd gone to bed. He didn't dwell on it, though. We were anxious to get down to the lobby in time for breakfast and the guided tour the hotel offered on weekends.

(Continued next month...)

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